

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 DODE-00 CIAE-00

INRE-00 ACDE-00 /026 W

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O P 181138Z JUL 78 ZFF 4

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 0373

USMISSION USNATO NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

USDEL MBFR VIENNA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 13085

EXDIS

USSALTTWO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM NATO

SUBJECT: FRG ATTITUDE RE JULY 19 NAC ON SALT AND
THEATER SYSTEMS

REFS: (A) STATE 177957; (B) STATE 179510 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY. THE FRG HAS SOME PROBLEMS WITH THE SPECIFIC
LANGUAGE OF THE STATEMENT WE PROPOSE TO MAKE REGARDING
NEGOTIATIONS OF THEATER WEAPON SYSTEMS. HOWEVER, IT
WOULD LIKE TO HANDLE THE SUBJECT IN A WAY THAT WILL
GET US PAST THE JULY 19 NAC FOR FURTHER BILATERAL
CONSULTATIONS LATER. END SUMMARY.

1. DUE TO THE VISIT HERE OF PRESIDENT CARTER, WE COULD
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NOT CONSULT WITH FRG ON REFS (A) AND (B) UNTIL MORNING
JULY 18. AT THAT POINT THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR CARRIED
OUT THE INSTRUCTIONS IN REFS (A) AND (B). A
LONG DISCUSSION ENSUED, DURING WHICH WE OFFERED
SUBSTANCE OF EXPLANATIONS CONTAINED IN REF (A) IN ORDER
TO INDICATE TO RUTH WHAT US OBJECTIVES WERE WITH RESPECT
TO OUR STATEMENT. RUTH UNDERSTOOD THESE POINTS.

2. RUTH SAID THE FRG HAD THE FOLLOWING BASIC ATTITUDE TOWARD THE US STATEMENT:

-- THE FRG WAS "VERY POSITIVE" ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE STATEMENT.

-- THE FRG ACCEPTS OUR TEXT AS A TYPE OF TEXT TEXT THAT COULD BE USED TO SERVE OUR PURPOSE, BUT WOULD LIKE TO EXPLORE FURTHER THE POSSIBILITIES OF FINDING WHAT RUTH TERMED THE "OPTIMAL FORMULA."

-- THE FRG HAD NOT EARLIER BEEN AWARE THAT WE WANTED TO CLOSE THE DISCUSSION OF THIS TOPIC WITH THE JULY 19 NAC, AND THEREFORE HAD NOT YET FULLY CLARIFIED ITS OWN ATTITUDES.

-- AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE TYPE OF LANGUAGE THE FRG MIGHT FIND "OPTIMAL," RUTH SUGGESTED SUBSTITUTING THE PHRASE "CAPABLE OF MEDIUM RANGE" FOR "PRINCIPALLY DESIGNED FOR THEATER MISSIONS." HE SAID HE WANTED TO FIND LANGUAGE THAT WAS AS UNAMBIGUOUS AS POSSIBLE SO AS NOT TO PERMIT THE SOVIETS TO EXPLOIT OUR FORMULA FOR TACTICAL PURPOSES.

4. RUTH AND HIS COLLEAGUE CITRON OFFERED THE FOLLOWING SECRET

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REASONS FOR THEIR RESERVATIONS ABOUT OUR PROPOSED LANGUAGE:

-- THE SOVIETS MIGHT ARGUE THAT CRUISE MISSILES ARE NOT DESIGNED PRINCIPALLY FOR THEATER MISSIONS BECAUSE THEY ARE, AT LEAST IN ONE OF THE SALT VARIANTS, DESIGNED FOR STRATEGIC MISSIONS ON B-52'S. THEREFORE, THE SOVIETS MIGHT ARGUE THAT LIMITS ON CRUISE MISSILES CANNOT PROPERLY BE OFFSET BY LIMITS ON THEIR THEATER SYSTEMS.

-- BY THE SAME TOKEN, SINCE ALCM'S BY ONE SALT DEFINITION ARE PART OF A STRATEGIC SYSTEM, THE SOVIETS MIGHT ARGUE THAT ALL CRUISE MISSILES SHOULD BE REGARDED AS STRATEGIC.

-- SIMILARLY, THE MENTION OF CRUISE MISSILES IN THE PROTOCOL COULD BE SO EXPLOITED.

-- BY SPEAKING OF "PRINCIPALLY ... THEATER MISSIONS," THE US PUTS NO BOTTOM LIMIT ON THE RANGE OF SYSTEMS THAT COULD BE ENCOMPASSED. THAT MIGHT

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PROVE UNWELCOME AT A LATER STAGE.

5. RUTH ARGUED THAT THE SOVIETS MIGHT EXPLOIT THESE DEFINITIONAL PROBLEMS FOR TACTICAL GAINS WHICH COULD ONLY BE GOT OUT OF THE WAY BY SOME OTHER COMPENSATION FROM US. WHEN THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR OBSERVED THAT IT WAS POLITICAL REALITY THAT THE SOVIETS HAD TO RECOGNIZE THESE SYSTEMS AS A THEATER FUNCTION EVEN IF THEY HAD AT SOME POINT BEEN TIED TO SALT, RUTH AGREED BUT OBSERVED THAT HE WAS WORRIED ABOUT THE SOVIET PASSION FOR TACTICAL MANEUVERING. IN THIS CONTEXT, HE SAID THAT WE SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT HE WAS NOT SAYING OUR FORMULA WAS BAD, BUT MERELY THAT HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR US BILATERALLY TO SEE IF IT WAS THE BEST THAT COULD POSSIBLY BE FOUND.

6. AFTER CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION, DURING WHICH THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR REITERATED THE POINTS
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MADE IN PARA 3 OF REF (B), RUTH SAID IT WAS NOT HIS OR THE FRG INTENT TO CREATE A "DIFFICULT DISCUSSION" AT THE JULY 19 NAC. HE SAID THE FRG WOULD MUCH PREFER TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE BILATERALLY, PERHAPS THROUGH EXCHANGES AT EMBASSIES HERE AND IN WASHINGTON.

7. RUTH THOUGHT THE FRG REP MIGHT POSSIBLY MAKE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR BENNETT'S BRIEFING TOMORROW: THE FRG WELCOMES THE US STATEMENT AND ITS ACCOMPANYING EXPLANATION AS AN "IMPORTANT CLARIFICATION," WILL "TAKE NOTE" OF THE US EXPLANATION, AND WILL LOOK AT THE US TEXT "IN THIS LIGHT."

8. RUTH SAID HE THOUGHT THIS KIND OF GERMAN STATEMENT WOULD GET US PAST THE JULY 19 MEETING AND WOULD ALLOW US TO REVIEW THE TEXT AT MORE LEISURE. HIS PROBLEM IN FORMULATING IT WAS THAT HE DID NOT KNOW, JUST AS WE DO NOT KNOW, WHAT THE ATTITUDES OF OTHER COUNTRIES MIGHT BE. HE COULD NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE FRG MIGHT VOICE ITS CONCERNS MORE DIRECTLY AND MORE CLEARLY IF OTHER STATES INITIATED A NAC DISCUSSION ON THE PRECISE WORDING OF THE US TEXT.

9. IT IS OUR IMPRESSION THAT RUTH'S POSITION IS BASED ON TWO BASIC GERMAN CONCERNS REGARDING GRAY AREA SYSTEM NEGOTIATIONS: FIRST, THE GERMANS WANT TO MINIMIZE THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN INTERCONTINENTAL AND THEATER SYSTEMS IN ORDER TO REDUCE THE DE-COUPPLING DANGER; SECOND, THE GERMANS ARE VERY INTERESTED IN HAVING GRAY AREA SYSTEMS TALKS AND WANT TO MINIMIZE THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE SOVIETS CAN EITHER ESCAPE SUCH
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CONVERSATIONS OR MAKE US PAY MORE THAN A MINIMAL PRICE TO GET THEM. WE HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE GERMANS, LIKE OURSELVES, ARE ACUTELY SENSITIVE TO THE IMBALANCE IN THE NUMBER OF SYSTEMS THAT MIGHT BE PROPOSED FOR DISCUSSION.

10. THE FACT THAT THE GERMANS ARE NOT YET SURE OF THEIR OWN ULTIMATE POSITION, HAVING NOT COMPLETED THEIR OWN PAPERS OR EVEN THEIR OWN DEFINITION, ADDS TO THEIR WORRIES. THEY ALSO HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT WE ARE NOT YET TOTALLY SURE OF THE BEST ROUTE AND THEY APPEAR TO BE LOOKING FOR LANGUAGE THAT LEAVES MAXIMUM

FLEXIBILITY FOR THE ALLIES.

11. NONETHELESS, RUTH REITERATED THAT HE DID NOT
WANT TO TURN THE JULY 19 NAC BRIEFING INTO A DRAFTING
SESSION BUT DID NOT WANT US TO LOCK OURSELVES
INTO THE LANGUAGE SO TOTALLY AT THAT MEETING THAT THERE
WOULD NOT BE LATER CHANCES TO REVIEW IT IN
THE LIGHT OF FURTHER STUDY AND CONSULTATION. STOESSEL

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